**PORT GOES DOWN IN ELIMINATION FINAL**

Last Saturday the Cygnet Football Club Senior team travelled to Shark Park to take on Dodges Ferry in the SFL Elimination Final. While earlier in the day the Southern Storm were up against their recent nemesis, Lindisfarne in the Colts Qualifying Final at Claremont.

Unfortunately the day did not go as hoped, with both the Port Seniors and Storm Colts sides going to their opponents.

**COLTS**

The Storm boys were looking to reverse their previous meeting result and lacklustre performance against Lindisfarne two weeks ago, and retain the important double-chance they achieved by finishing the home and away season in second place on the ladder.

The first quarter was an even, low scoring affair with both sides finding it difficult to penetrate their opponent’s defences, and with the Storm’s only goal for the term coming off the boot of Jake Munnings, the Storm led by a solitary point at quarter time.

The game was effectively won in the second quarter, with Lindisfarne breaking the game open to kick three goals whilst restricting the Storm to two behinds only and at half-time the margin was 19 points in Lindisfarne’s favour.

The second half saw the scoring again tighten up, with both teams kicking one goal only in each of the third and fourth quarters. But for Lindisfarne’s inaccuracy (6 goals 10 behinds), the margin could have been far greater than the 22 points at the final siren.

Young Jacob Burnett’s football ability continues to develop and he, along with Lukas Ford (again), Cameron Slater, Jake Munnings, Luke Ashlin and Will Polley were solid contributors and battled hard all day. Jordan Lane and Noah Clifford were the Storm’s other goal kickers.

The Storm’s form has been up and down in recent weeks and they now must re-group and prepare well for their ‘do or die’ first semi-final clash with Sorell at Huonville Oval this Saturday, with the first bounce at 9.50am.

**SENIORS**

Perfect sunny conditions presented for the Senior Elimination Final at Dodges Ferry’s Shark Park, but with a strong breeze blowing across the ground and favouring the top end which aided the Port in the first quarter. The Port were doing most of the attacking early in the quarter but were finding the swirling wind difficult at times. Joe Direen was winning the ruck contests and giving the Port midfielders first use of the ball. Scoring went goal for goal but with three goals (Halton, Cowen and Reardon) to two for the quarter, the Port had opened up a nine point lead at the first break.

The Port backline was under constant pressure in the second quarter as the Sharks started to win the centre clearances and get their running game going. Using their home ground knowledge the Sharks often attacked from the scoreboard side using the wind to their advantage and with four goals for the term to the Port’s two goals (Verrell and Shaw), Dodges now had a narrow 5 point lead at half-time. To add to the Port’s woes, key defender Cam Wilcox had injured his hamstring and would take no part in the second half.

The flow of the game again changed in the third quarter, with the Port peppering the top-end goals but again inaccuracy was proving a problem, with the Port scoring four goals only from 12 scoring shots including two great snaps from Elijah Reardon and Toby Cowen. Key forward, Ben Halton added two goals for the quarter which saw the Port led by an even three goals at the final break. However with the Sharks kicking to the scoring end in the last quarter, both players and supporters knew that it would be a real battle until the end.

Early in the last quarter Jackson Gordon went down with a rolled ankle and not long after, Will Ford went down with the same injury. As a result the Port were down three key defenders – which was going to prove costly. Despite the best efforts of their midfield and defenders, the Port were having difficulties breaking through the Shark’s strong half-back line and from nine inside 50’s were only able to score two behinds for the term. Dodges’ smaller brigade were running everywhere, getting their hands on the ball first, creating the loose man and hitting their leading forwards. The Sharks came home with the proverbial ‘wet sail’, scoring five goals from their thirteen scoring attempts for the term, to reverse their three-quarter deficit and run out victors by 17 points.

Mitchell Direen and Jackson Gordon were prominent in the backline, with both constantly trying to break the line off half-back and drive the ball long and quickly into the Port’s forward area. Andrew Palmer was again tireless in and under the contests all day, working hard and winning numerous possessions while Will Ford, until injured, worked hard to stall the Shark’s constant forward pressure and taking several strong marks. George O’Neill provided plenty of run off his wing, tackled strongly and mixed it well against often bigger opponents and Ben Halton, whether up forward where he kicked three goals despite strong opposition, or on the ball, again showed his real class.

Toby Cowen and Elijah Reardon each kicked 2 goals with Pat Verrell and Jason Shaw the Port’s other goal scorers.

After the game, a disappointed Coach Ben Cato lamented the missed opportunities presented in season 2018, but with the Club’s ‘blooding’ of youth and talent it augers well for a promising future for the Port if the team can stay together.

**BEST & FAIREST COUNT**

Arrangements for the Club’s Best and Fairest count are currently being finalised, with details to be advised in next week’s Club Notes.

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